

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 457

Commending the Westmoreland Ruritan Club.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 17, 2011
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2011

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club is celebrating its 75th anniversary of extraordinary volunteer service to its county and community in 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club was presented its original charter on October 19, 1936, by National President Grayson Holt at the former Harris Tea Room in Montross, making the club the twenty-eighth Ruritan Club chartered in America; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club was sponsored by the Essex County Ruritan Club, and J.F. Johnson served as the first president with E.T. Hynson and Robert Murphy as vice presidents; H.F. Adams as secretary; W.F. Massey as treasurer; and Melvin C. Moss, S.J. Dawson, and James Latane as directors; and

WHEREAS, charter members included the Reverend George E. Powell, H.O. Doleman, Dr. E.T. Ames, H.W. Coates, F.F. Chandler, Francis Delano, W.H. Caldwell, R.B. Gill, P.H. Gouldman, George W. Grigsby, R.H. Harris, E.C. Healy, T.R. Jackson, R.B. Massey, J.C. Moss, Ira S. Mothershead, Blake T. Newton, E.M. Pennington, Ray E. Reid, R.L. Griffith, Jr., Charles E. Stuart, C.F. Unruh, John Ware, E.C. Newton, Robert Bray, A.L. Wingo, C.S. Hennage, Jr., and F.M. Stiff; and

WHEREAS, Ruritan National was originally organized by Jack Gwaltney and Tom Downing for the purpose of bringing local farmers and businessmen together to discuss and work toward preventing and solving many of the problems and challenges confronting rural and urban America; and

WHEREAS, the goal and stated motto of Ruritan is to promote "fellowship, goodwill, and community service"; and

WHEREAS, Ruritan is America's largest rural community service organization; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has been recognized on numerous occasions at both the Chesapeake District and Ruritan National conventions for its dedication and has received many awards for its outstanding contributions and devoted service to its community; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has also been active on the district and national levels having provided Ruritan National with one national president, Charles Unruh; and four district governors, Mason Cockrell, Jack Spina, Ronald Elza, and Ken Chatham, in addition to other district and zone officers, committee chairmen, and members; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club was instrumental in replacing the Medal of Honor monument on the Virginia acre at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge with a beautiful and fitting granite obelisk; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of each Ruritan Club is to build a stronger America by working together to make each community a better place in which to live; and

WHEREAS, Ruritans work through the five major committees of Citizenship and Patriotism, Environment, Social Development, Business and Professions, and Public Services to address the needs of their individual communities; and

WHEREAS, Ruritan is unique in that it is not known for nor does it focus on just one area of concern, but asks its members to identify areas of concern in their own community and to put the funds raised locally to work to address those local needs; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has worked to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars by selling birthday calendars, Christmas trees, fruit cakes, bull roast sandwiches, crab soup, hot dogs, and hamburgers; hosting raffles and fall festival sales, and by sponsoring the American Flag Project and Potomac River Rockfish Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has spent those hundreds of thousands of dollars locally, providing scholarships and loans to enable deserving students to attend college, sponsoring Red Cross blood drives, supporting the Cancer Society's Relay for Life, supporting local rescue squads and fire departments, and participating in the Food for the Hungry program; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has provided the materials and instructors for many years to teach the American Constitution in elementary schools; donated dictionaries to elementary school students; conducted the Keep Virginia Green Poster Contest at area schools; and sponsored Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Little League teams, swimming lessons, students attending the 4-H Camp, school Problem Solver teams, the Virginia Patriots' Conference, and the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has recognized outstanding community volunteers and

outstanding student achievement and sponsored and financially supported the establishment of Ruritan clubs at county high schools, which have had major positive impacts in those schools; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club received national recognition on May 30, 1982, when it provided and dedicated the Vietnam Veterans Memorial granite monument, replete with sculptured bronze bust and time capsule on the courthouse green, in a ceremony that included a presentation by the Virginia adjutant general, patriotic selections by the Marine Corps Band, and a military jet low-level flyover; and

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland Ruritan Club has worked diligently and tirelessly for 75 years promoting fellowship, goodwill, and community service, and has succeeded in making its community a better place in which to live; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Westmoreland Ruritan Club on the occasion of its 75th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Westmoreland Ruritan Club as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations, admiration, and gratitude for the club's exemplary community service.